

Consultation and Coordination

Public notice, outreach and input for Accountability System, Support to Schools and Educators and All Students

An overall project management implementation team was formed in January 2016. A major focus of this team was to ensure stakeholder engagement was part of all ESSA implementation activities. To that end, the project management team first convened over 70 employees of the MT Office of Public Instruction. Department-wide meetings, leadership council meetings and division meetings all addressed ESSA updates. The OPI website also features regular updates on ESSA implementation work.

The OPI began work on forming an official stakeholders group in February 2016 with a call for members distributed widely to statewide organizations and interest groups. The stakeholders group, with representatives from all required groups, was appointed on March 24, 2016 with its first meeting held in Helena on May 24. Subsequent in-person meetings were held on September 26 and October 24. These meetings were structured to gain comments and recommendations from all the stakeholders. Members of the public attended and provided public comment as well. A fourth stakeholders meeting was added to the original schedule and held November 10.

In addition, OPI gave presentations and received feedback on ESSA and Montana's work on the state plan development at the SAM (School Administrators of Montana) New Administrators meeting on July 19, 2016, the Montana PTA (Parent-Teachers Association) state meeting on September 24, 2016, the MCEL (Montana Conference for Educational Leadership) meeting on October 20-21, and the MEA-MFT (Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers) Fall Conference on October 21, 2016. OPI staff will also attend monthly MASS (Montana Association of School Superintendents) meetings where they will present information and receive comments on Montana's draft plan for the implementation of ESSA during the public comment period. This statewide effort to continue to reach out and provide information to all schools and districts across Montana and receive feedback will continue. On November 14, a consultation meeting was held with the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) and tribal leaders. In addition, OPI representatives met with the Higher Education Consortium (HEC) to discuss the development of the plan and receive input.

The Montana State Superintendent also provides monthly updates to all schools and districts. In March of 2016 the Superintendent sent an email statewide, announcing the formation of the ESSA Stakeholder group. In July, she publicized her vision and guiding principles for ESSA implementation in Montana. In September the Superintendent provided an update regarding ESSA implementation in Montana to all schools and districts. The OPI also developed a webpage where all documents and announcements are published so that the ESSA implementation process can be transparent and available. Our state education associations have agreed to assist in the process of sharing information and obtaining feedback.

The draft state plan was posted on the OPI website on November 16, 2016 and simultaneously delivered to Governor Steve Bullock's office for the required 30-day public comment period. A press release on November 16 announced the availability of the draft to the public along with information on how to submit comments.

Posting our draft ESSA Plan is another source of meaningful statewide input. Comments will be read and processed throughout the 30-day period as edits to the draft document continue, with final changes completed between the close of the comment period on December 16 and submission date of December 23.

Administration of ESSA programs includes coordination with

- IDEA
- Rehabilitation Act
- Carl Perkins Act
- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act
- Head Start Act
- Child Care Development Block Grant Act
- Education Sciences Reform Act
- Education Technical Assistance Act
- National Assessment of Education Progress Authorization Act
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

Representatives of these programs have been included either in ESSA planning sessions or other strategic planning sessions in conjunction with the administration of their specific grants. For example, the OPI ESSA state plan work group and accountability work group include representatives from the Division of Special Education and the Division of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (Perkins, WIOA, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act), as well as other divisions of the OPI. Montana's NAEP coordinator is also part of the accountability work group. In the implementation of the federal Preschool Development Grant, OPI has regular team meetings with representatives of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services which administers Head Start and the Child Care Development Block Grant. Additionally, the grant implementation involves collaboration with representatives of the Montana University System, several Tribal Colleges, and The Governor's Best Beginnings Advisory Council (GBAC). The GBAC includes representation from interested constituency groups, governmental agencies, the public at large, child care providers, state and local government, and tribal communities. OPI is also a partner in grants from the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) and SAMSHA from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as School Nutrition grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OPI representatives from all these grants have participated in ESSA planning efforts.